Strong rebound in hours worked in the December quarter

Media Release

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Source: Labour Account Australia, December 2021

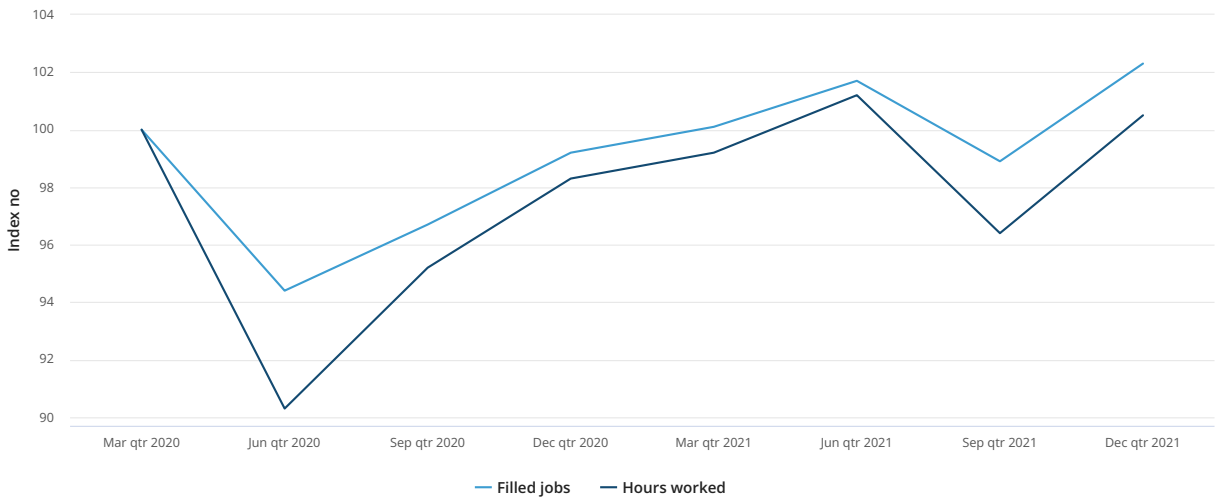
Seasonally adjusted hours worked increased by 221 million hours (4.3 per cent) and filled jobs increased by 472,000 (3.4 per cent) in the December quarter 2021, according to figures released today by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

Bjorn Jarvis, head of Labour Statistics at the ABS, said "Hours worked and filled jobs both rebounded strongly in the December quarter 2021, as the lockdowns and other restrictions from the September quarter were eased."

The 4.3 per cent increase in hours worked in December followed a fall of 4.8 per cent in the September quarter, while the 3.4 per cent increase in filled jobs followed a fall of 2.7 per cent.

"As we have seen throughout the pandemic, the recovery in hours worked was slower than the recovery in jobs, as business activity progressively ramped up during the quarter. While filled jobs in the December quarter were 0.6 per cent higher than June quarter 2021, hours worked were 0.7 per cent lower."

Filled jobs and hours worked, Indexed to March 2020, seasonally adjusted



“The December quarter was before the widespread impacts on hours worked associated with the Omicron variant of COVID, which were seen early in January. Labour Force statistics (/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia/jan-2022) showed an 8.8 per cent fall (seasonally adjusted) in hours worked between December and January, with more people than usual sick or on leave.”

Multiple job-holding

The increase in filled jobs in the December quarter was seen in both main jobs (up 374,000, or 2.8 per cent) and secondary jobs (up 99,000, or 11.5 per cent).

"The larger percentage increase in secondary jobs reflected an increase in the number of multiple job-holders over the quarter, which rose by 13.1 per cent to over 850,000 people. The multiple job-holding rate increased by 0.6 percentage points to 6.4 per cent, the highest since the series commenced in 1994." Mr Jarvis said.

Job vacancies

Demand for workers again grew in the December quarter following a fall in the September quarter, with job vacancies increasing by 58,000 (16.8 per cent).

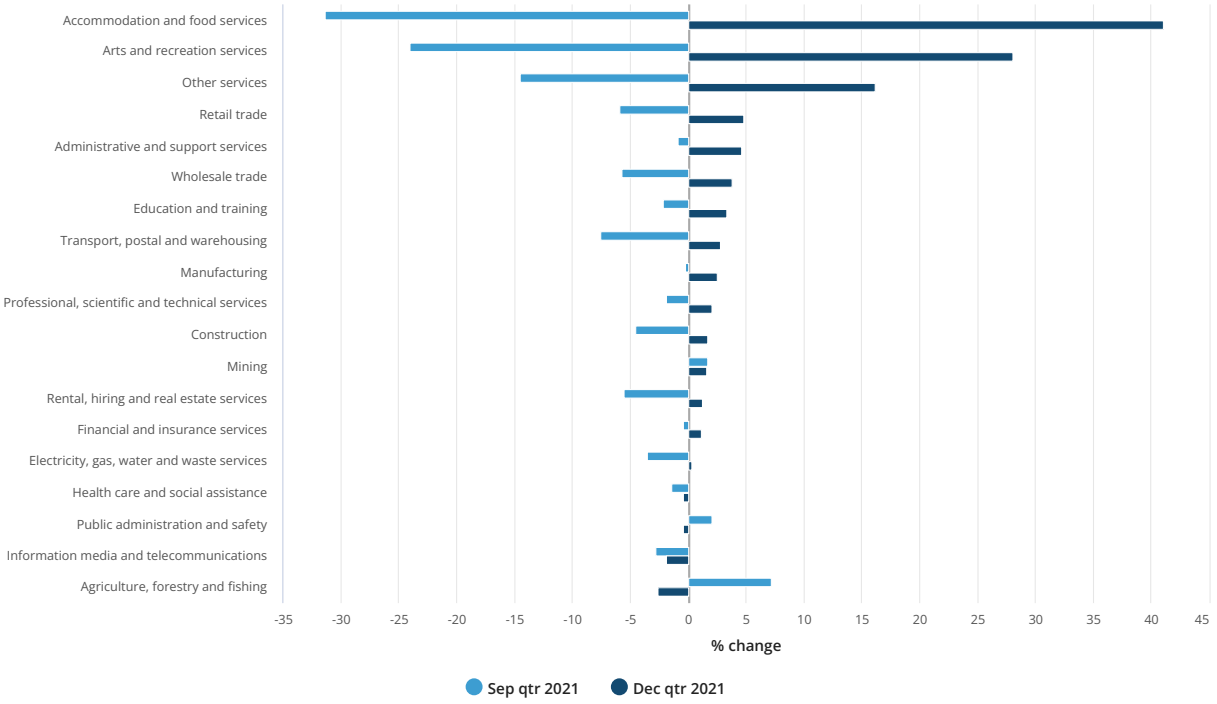
“Job vacancies accounted for 2.7 per cent of all jobs in December quarter 2021. This share is the highest it has been in the three decades of Labour Account data, and well above the start of the pandemic, when it was 1.6 per cent." Mr Jarvis said.

Industry

The rebound in the December quarter was reflected in growth in hours worked across 15 of the 19 industries and growth in filled jobs across 16 of the 19 industries.

As seen earlier in the pandemic, changes in the Accommodation and food services industry were the most pronounced, with an increase of 163,000 jobs (16.1 per cent) and 88 million hours (41.1 per cent). This followed large falls in the industry in the September quarter of 150,000 jobs (-12.9 per cent) and 98 million hours (-31.4 per cent).

Change in hours worked, by Industry, seasonally adjusted


Accommodation and food services
Arts and recreation services
Other services
Retail trade
Administrative and support services
Wholesale trade
Education and training
Transport, postal and warehousing
Manufacturing
Professional, scientific and technical services
Construction
Mining
Rental, hiring and real estate services
Financial and insurance services
Electricity, gas, water and waste services
Health care and social assistance
Public administration and safety
Information media and telecommunications
Agriculture, forestry and fishing
-35 -30 -25 -20 -15 -10 -5 0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40 45
% change
Sep qtr 2021
Dec qtr 2021

Construction was the only industry that had a fall in jobs (-1.4 per cent) in the December quarter, following an increase in the September quarter (1.2 per cent). Agriculture, forestry and fishing and Public administration and safety were the only industries that saw a decline in hours worked in December quarter following increases in both industries in the September quarter.

“While most industries saw an increase in hours worked in December 2021, 7 of 19 industries were still below their pre-pandemic levels.” Mr Jarvis said.

Media notes

- ‘Filled jobs’ refer to jobs with employed people in them. The Labour Account also includes information on job vacancies and total jobs.
- The Australian Labour Account complements other ABS measures to build a more comprehensive picture of the labour market. Labour Account data provides the number of filled jobs at a point-in-time each quarter, while the annual Jobs in Australia data provides insights into all jobs held throughout the year, and Labour Force Survey (/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia/latest-release) data measures the number of people employed each month.
- Data contained in this media release refer to seasonally adjusted estimates, unless otherwise stated.
- When reporting ABS data, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (or ABS) must be attributed as the source.
- For media requests and interviews, contact the ABS Media Team via media@abs.gov.au (mailto:media@abs.gov.au) (8.30am-5pm Mon-Fri).
- A glossary (/methodologies/labour-account-australia-methodology/dec-2021#glossary) of terms used in this media release is available with the publication.
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- 10/03/2022 post release change: Corrected the order of the labels for 'Public administration and safety' and 'Health care and social assistance' in industry graph.